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A BRIEF TESTIMONY FOR RELIGION:

SHEWING

That all *PENAL LAWS*, *Force* and *Violence* against any for Matters of meer *Religion* and *Conſcience*, are Inconſiſtent with the *DOCTRINES* and *PRECEPTS* of

Jeſus Chriſt.

PRESENTED

To the Conſideration of all, but more Eſpecially thoſe that may be choſen Members of Parliament, that they may ſee cauſe to concur with the Kings Gracious Declaration for Liberty of Conſcience.

By a Lover of the King and his Country, and a Hater of no Man becauſe of his Opinion.

WILLIAM SHEWEN.

Printed in the Year, 1688.

A BRIEF
TESTIMONY
FOR
RELIGION:

SHEWING

That all PENAL LAWS, Force and Power against any for Matters of meer Religion and Conscience, are Inconsistent with the DOCTRINES and PRECEPTS of

Jesus Christ.

PRESENTED

To the Consideration of all, but more Especially those that may be chosen Members of Parliament, that they may use their Power to concur with the Kings Gracious Declaration for Liberty of Conscience.

By a Lover of the King and his Country, and a Hater of no Man because of his Opinion.

WILLIAM SHEWEN.

Printed in the Year 1688.

A Brief Testimony for Religion, shewing that all Penal Laws, Force and Violence against any for Matters of meer Religion and Conscience, are inconsistent with the Doctrines and Precepts of Christ Jesus, &c.

THE Principle of Religion, is Inward, Spiritual and Divine, not contained in Books, nor taught by the Precepts of Men, being before Books, and the Precepts of Men were invented; and is in it self Sacred, Pure and Undefiled, Grounded, Planted and Placed in the Heart of Mankind, *by the Sacred, Pure, Undefiled God*, who hath given unto all *Life*, *Breath and Being*: And in all Nations upon the Face of the Earth, all People therein, who *fear God*, and *worketh Righteousness* are accepted by him; being in the Exercise of true Religion, doing *justly*, loving *Mercy*, and walking *uprightly* with God.

Now tho' God hath sown this Seed, laid this Foundation of Equity, Justice, Righteousness, Mercy and Fear towards him, in the Hearts of all Men; yet they are greatly Degenerated therefrom; those plants of his own Right-hand planting, are greatly overgrown with that which is quite contrary; *viz.* with the Weeds and Plants of *Iniquity, Injustice, Unrighteousness, Cruelty, Violence, Disobedience, Rebellion against God, and one another*

ther; so that almost the whole World of Mankind is now become Enemies to *God*, *Nature* and their *own selves*, in all Nations, Countries, and Kingdoms, according to the degree of their Degeneration from the *Law*, *Light*, *Love*, *Dread and Fear of the Almighty God*, which he at first Placed, Planted, and Engraved in the Heart of Mankind.

Some in most Nations (from the effect of what still remains) have been made sensible of their Loss, Nakedness and Degeneration from the *likeness* and *Image of God*, viz. *Uprightness*, *Holiness*, *Equity*, *Justice*, *and Mercy*, &c. And they have been greatly concerned in their Thoughts, Wills, and faln understandings, how to gain the same again, and have therein invented and set up, among Jews, Turks, and Indians, as in Christendome, various sorts and manners of VVorships, and Ceremonies of Religion (so called) thinking thereby to please God, profit themselves and others, by teaching and compelling (if they have Power) the observance thereof, tho in so doing they can go no further than *Adam* and *Cain* did, *hide and make a Covering with fig-leaves*, *offer a Sacrifice with one hand*, *and Murther with the other*, and are no more accepted therein than they were; and the infallible reason and cause of it is, because, all the Righteousness, and VVickedness, proceeding from Mankind in this Degenerate State, are both evil in the sight of God.

Mankind through his Fall and Degeneration, is so Polluted, so Defiled, so Corrupted, with the stinking Leprosie of Sin, that whatever he puts his hand to in things relating to Religion, and the service of God, is abomintion in his sight; yea, *the very Prayers of the Wicked are sin*: and out of this Estate he cannot help himself, he cannot Purge nor Purifie himself, nor redeem,

deem, nor deliver himself, by all his working, willing, and running, the Serpent is too Strong, too powerful, too Subtile, and cunning for all Mankind in this Estate, without a Saviour, without a Redeemer, without a Restorer, and Deliverer all Perish, &c.

Therefore God in his infinite Love and Kindness, did promise, and hath performed, hath given, and laid help upon one that is mighty to *Save*, to *Redeem*, to *Purge*, *Purifie*, and *Restore* lost Man, Defiled, Corrupted, Captivated Man into the Image of God again, into Righteousness, Purity, and Holiness again, and the first name this Redeemer and Saviour hath in the Holy Scriptures, is, *the Seed of the Woman*, and his first work is, *to bruise the head of the Serpent.*

Now this promis'd seed, *this precious gift of God*, hath many other names throughout the Holy Scriptures; and hath many other works to do, *in* and *for* Mankind, the Serpents head must not only be bruis'd by him, but he and all his works destroyed and cast out of the heart of Mankind. And this was and is the blessed end of his coming and appearing, even to destroy the Devil and all his Works, finish sin and bring in everlasting Righteousness in the room thereof: Even into the heart and mind of Mankind, which is Gods Throne tho the Serpent the Devil hath usurped it, my desire is, that all may come to enjoy that blessed Estate through Jesus Christ the Saviour.

VVhich Jesus Christ the Saviour is the Author and Founder of the Christian Religion in the Purity and Power of it; which Religion excels all other Religions upon the Face of the Earth, who are Impure, Imperfect, and VVeak, made up of Mens Inventions, Precepts, and Traditions, Carnal Ordinances, VVorldly Rudiments, and Beggarly Elements; which had a beginning

ginning and must have an end, together with all Hatred and Persecution about them, for it hath been mad about these things, that those who lived in and under them, have made Laws to force, and compel observance and Conformity thereto, for nothing of that sort or nature ever did, or can proceed from the Christian Religion, in the Purity and Power of it: Its Fundamental Principles, Precepts, Doctrines and Examples are quite the contrary. *Love your Enemies, Bless them that Curse you, Do good to them that hate you, Pray for them that dispitefully use you and persecute you: As you would that Men should do unto you, Do so likewise unto them. Be like your Heavenly Father, who maketh his Sun to shine on the Evil and on the good, and sendeth Rain on the Just, and on the Unjust: Love one another, as I have loved you, love ye also one another: By this shall all Men know, that you are my Disciples, if you have love to one another. Do good to all* &c. This is the Tenure of the Gospel of Christ: *Peace on Earth, and good will to Men.* And they only were and are Disciples indeed, who did and do observe those divine Precepts and Commands of Christ. *And all that profess love to him, and a knowledge of him, and keepeth not his Commandments, are Lyars, and the Truth is not in them,* let them profess what they will.

There is no ground nor foundation for Sanguinary Laws, nor for any sort of Persecution, Violence, or Cruelty about Religion, in the lovely, meek, quiet, and innocent Spirit of Christianity, nor in the Precepts, Principles, and Discipline of it, they have certainly arose in Christendom from another Spirit, that hath assum'd the Name, and Usurp't the Throne of God, the Heart and mind of Men, which hath come to pass, through the working of the Mistery of Iniquity, Serpent, and Antichrist, under the Name of God Almighty and Christianity;

nity, the Nature thereof being wanting in all that have been concerned therein.

For according to the Testimony and Phrase of Holy Scripture, and the experience of Thousands in this Age, Men have been, are, and may be so intoxicated in their Minds, and understandings, so mistaken, and Captivated under that Monster false Opinion; so corrupted by Tradition, and Superstitious Education, *&c.* that they have been, and are said to be made bewitched given up to believe strong Delusions, made drunk with the VVine of Fornication, which by the VVhore (the false Church) is held forth in a golden Cup to all Nations, according to that notable Vision of the Divine Apostle St. *John*, in his Revelation: read the 17*th.* Chapter, in a Measure of the same Divine Spirit of Revelation, or else you will mistake, as all Sectarians hath done, *&c.*

Now seeing People may be Spiritually Drunk, mad, bewitched, deceived, mistaken, blind, and intoxicated so far, as to take Truth for Error, and Error for Truth, good for Evil, and Evil for good, Light for Darkness, and Darkness for Light, true Religion for false, and false for true, *&c.* And proceed in their Conversation and doings accordingly, towards their Neighbours and Countrymen, when they have power and opportunity in their Hand.

Its therefore wisdom to know these distemper'd People, and what means and medicine is to be used towards such people, and how far the Christian Magistrate and Law-maker, are concerned about such things.

There are two Infallible Signs that people are in the State above: first when they are prone to or put forward in a Blind Zeal, to hate, or hurt their Neighbours, or Country-men, because they are not of the same opinion in matters of Religion; nor do not Worship after

the ſame manner, or in the ſame form and faſhion as they do.

2*ly*. When they make it matter of conſcience and duty to deal with ſuch as are not of their Church and way, as with Weeds and Vermine, and think they do God good Service therein. Theſe are two infallible Signs, that People are Religiouſly mad and miſtaken.

Paul, when a Perſecutor (tho by the Authority of the wiſeſt men, greateſt Schollars, higheſt profeſſors of Religion, chief Prieſt, *&c.*) was one of the Religious mad men, and they were no better that imployed him, and gave him Commiſſion for the ſame: Notwithſtanding they thought and believed otherwiſe; ſaying, God was their Father, and that they were *Abraham*'s Children, tho at that very time they were doing the Works of the Devil, and perſecuting the Seed, and true Children of God and *Abraham*; yet knew not themſelves, what they did, nor what they were, while they were breathing out threatnings, ſlaughter, and Death puniſhing in every Synagogue (or Pariſh) and compelling to Blaſpheme; being as *Paul* ſaid of himſelf (before King *Agrippa*) *exceeding mad againſt the poor Chriſtians*, perſecuting them even unto ſtrange Cities: all this in his mad Zeal and Ignorance, he with thoſe of his (Religion or rather) opinion, thought was very well done.

So as hath been ſaid, its wiſdom to know theſe diſtemper'd people, which if any lack, let them ask it of God, for it is his own Gift, that makes known perſons and things as they are, in the *Ground* and *Nature*, and enables to give them Names according thereto, and to judge righteouſly, and not by appearance, and without this gift of God, no man can know himſelf, nor judge his Brother aright.

If Education, Tradition, Academical Learning, or a profeſſion

profeſſion and imitation of that Religion, which God himſelf commanded, could teach a Man the knowledge of God, or himſelf, thoſe Jews, Doctors and Rabbies would have had it: none in thoſe Ages exceeding them in thoſe things; yet all they attained to thereby, was juſt as if we ſhould ſee a Man believe and declare himſelf to be the Son of ſome great Prince, or that ſome mighty Monarch was his Father, who had given him Power and Authority as his Vice-gerent, to correct, order, amend and govern, in his Kingdom, when he is no other than the Son of a Vile Butchery Executioner, and is aſſiſting his Father in his filthy Drugery; for Chriſt told them *they were of their Father the Devil, and his Works they did*, even at that very inſtance, when they believed and declared themſelves to be the Children of God and *Abraham*, *&c.*

Now thoſe that are, and would be doing the ſame ſort of work; let their pretence be what it will, they are in the ſame condition; tho they may not be ſenſible thereof, nor ſee themſelves to be ſuch; for why is a Man ſaid to be mad Spiritually, is it not becauſe the God of this World (that lies in wickedneſs) hath blinded the Eye of his mind, darkned and vayled his Underſtanding and Judgment, that he cannot ſee, underſtand, nor judge aright of the things of God, and yet believes and perſwades himſelf he can, and by his will and power would force, and compel others to believe the ſame, and to receive his underſtanding and judgment therein, under pains and penalties, *&c.* This is the Nature and Property of a blind mad Zealot.

Moſt in Chriſtendom are ready to cenſure *Paul* and the Jews, for their rage and madneſs, cruelty and violence againſt Chriſt and his harmleſs Diſciples, and alſo the Gentiles for their Brutiſh Inhumanity againſt the primi-

tive Christians, in the Ten Persecutions, though they have been and are doing the same work, even against those that profess the same Name together with them, and yet justifie themselves therein, and think they do God good Service thereby, which is an evident Token they are of the same sort, for Persecutors were always blind.

And Persecutions under the Name of Christ and Christianity, and under pretence of the Propagating and preserving the Christian Religion, are far worse, and under a greater degree of madness, blindness, and ignorance, then either Jews or Heathen: they are not only blind and mad, but Drunk also, Infatuated, Stupified, Intoxicated, and less excuseable then all other Persecutors upon the Face of the Earth, because they do profess and account themselves to be Disciples of that Imaculate Lamb Christ Jesus, who was always loving, meek, gentle, tender, and kind to all mankind, going up and down, doing good, never harming any, laying down his life for his Enemies, and praying for them, and gave forth those divine Heavenly Precepts and Commandments before mentioned, for all his Disciples and Followers to observe, keep and obey. Now wherever people are found making profession of Christ Jesus and his Religion, and doing those things which are not only Repugnant to it, but inconsistent with it: certainly such are in a farther degree of blindness and madness, and more inexcuseable, than either Jew or Heathen, for they had no such Heavenly example, nor no such divine Precepts and Commandments in their Religion, but rather the contrary.

Therefore a Christian Persecutor (if such a thing could be) would be as a Monster in Nature; that which is in its self most mild, loving, gentle, harmless and innocent, would become the most wild, cruel, ravenous and devouring, if this could be, not only Nature, but Religi-

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on it ſelf would be turned quite out of courſe. Lillies would tear the Thorns, and Lambs devour the Wolves, and the Sheep prey upon the Tygers, Bears and Lyons, and the innocent Dove would devour the Birds of prey.

But theſe things cannot be; therefore it may certainly be concluded, and infallibly believed, that whoever is found promoting or acting Cruelty or Violence, againſt any under the name and profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religon, are Wolves in Sheeps cloathing, painted Sepulchres, and profeſſing Hypocrites; neither truly loving God nor their Neighbour, which Love is the Foundation of true Religion, and by their works and doings (not by their words) they may be, and are known.

Now when theſe poor deceived diſtemper'd people are known, evidently by the Signs of their diſeaſe aforementioned, what courſe is to be taken with them, what means and medicine doth Humanity and Chriſtianity call for? And how far is the Chriſtian Magiſtrate and Law-makers, concerned about ſuch things?

Anſ. Firſt, they are greatly to be pitied, becauſe the Cauſe of their diſtempers generally is *Hereditary*, they are born of *Jews*, *Turks* or *Mahometans*, *Infidels* or *Chriſtians*, and are trained up, and educated in their Various *ways* and *worſhips*, *beliefs* and *opinions* about Religion, by their Parents and Tutors; ſo that they are Tinctured, if not poſſeſſed with Hereditary traditional Religion, or the Opinions of their Fore-fathers, before they know they are men, and become ſo bound with the Chains of *Tradition*, *Cuſtom* and *Opinion*, in the things relating to Religion, that they give up their *Wills*, *Judgment*, *Underſtanding*, *Conſcience*, and all for the forced Maintenance and Propagation thereof, tho it be to their

own

own hurt, and the ruin of others, not knowing nor rightly understanding what they do, being captivated as above, and the cause in the beginning chiefly from others.

Therefore even as Humanity teacheth to pity and take care of poor blind people, and such who are under a great Lunacy, or Distraction naturally as to provide for, and prevent their hurting themselves and others; so it leadeth to do the same for those that are blinded and distracted, through Tradition, Custom, Superstitious Education, and opinion: and Christianity teacheth a farther Lesson, even to pray for them; and with all mildness, gentleness, tenderness and love, to endeavour their better information, in order to their deliverance and redemption from under those sinful customs and false opinions, whose Tyranny and oppression makes not only Fools, but wise men mad.

And for so doing, Christ himself hath left Example, not only in his divine Precepts and Commandments before mentioned, but in his own person, when he prayed for those great professing people the Jews, whom he also wept over, and expressed as much tenderness towards them, as a Hen hath towards her Chicken; and when they were upon the point of Executing their utmost of envy, rage, blindness and madness upon him, he said, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*; and his Apostle *Paul* said, *if they had known him, they would not have Crucified the Lord of Glory*: this he knew to be true by woful experience himself, being blind and ignorant, while a mad zealous Persecutor: ignorance and envy hath been, and is the cause of all violence against the Righteous, and about Religion throughout all former Ages, and let the pretence be what it will, it hath no other foundation in this Age.

All the Inventers of *Creeds*, *Articles* of *Faith*, *Mass-books*,

books, *Common-prayer-books*, *Directories*, and other Prescribers of set forms of worship in whole Christendom have been prone to Curse persecution against such as comply not therewith; especially when any one of them becomes National, and are possessed of great Revenues for the maintenance of the same; that is as Oyl to the Flame that hath devoured many, and disturbed the whole Christian World.

Therefore it concerns the Christian Magistrates, and Law-makers, to take care that none of those people have power and opportunity to force and compel under corporal pains and penalties, the observation of their inventions and prescriptions; for such things proceeds not from true Religion, but from the *opinion and imagination* about it, and as hath been said, is inconsistent with it.

Now the great men of this Island of Great *Britain*, who are and may be concerned to make and execute Laws, may in the first place see it absolutely needful to abrogate and demolish all such Laws about Religion, as have proceeded from people in the State above; as all Laws to banish, hang, burn, Stigmatize, whip and imprison the Bodies of people for matters of meer Religion and Conscience are; and to make and establish such Laws in the room thereof, as may prevent any sort, or Sect of people to hurt, rifle and spoil their Neighbours and Country-men, because they may differ in their understanding and practice in matters of worship and religion; and that may command and enjoyn morality and good Neighbourhood, among men of different perswations about forms of worship, *&c.* herein the Nation would be made happy, even in your imitating the great God of *Love*, *Peace* and *Unity*, in the midst of all *variety*, and the light of his countenance would shine in you, and upon you.

And

And now you have a Season for so doing: The King in his late tender gracious Declaration, hath *out-done* all the Princes of Christendom, and set them a glorious example, by following which, they may make themselves and all their people happy: He is a Prince of great observation and experience, and hath thereby made himself a Throne in the Hearts and affections of his people: And if you do but cast an impartial Eye void of *prejudice* and *opinion* you will find none throughout the Nation, but such who are captivated thereby, and have been, and would be again persecutors about the mode and manner of Religion, and Church Ceremonies (it being the Nature of every Sect, *private* Spirit and opinion, to use force and compulsion when able) because false opinion, blind Zeal, and traditional Faith, is some of the Wine, with which the Whores cup is filled, whereby those that drink freely thereof, supposing it to be the Wine of the Kingdom, are made Drunk, intoxicated and mad therewith, as hath been said, you will find none but such that are for the continuation of such Laws, as would spoil men of their lives, liberties, and Estates in this World, about the things of another, about matters of meer Religion and Conscience, about humane inventions, carnal ordinances, and circumstances of Religion and Worship, to the great shame and scandal of Christian Religion, which never came into the World at that Door; neither did it ever use or prevail by such means, nor ever will; being certainly true, that all that are found in that way and work, under the profession of Christianity, they are in the Degeneration from the Nature thereof, and they are but a Sect, though they may call themselves Universal or National Church; have a care of Jealousies and false Suggestions; and take heed of making conclusions, that the design of the Kings Declaration

ration, is only to introduce the Roman Catholick Sect; herein you may abuse the best of Kings, for tho he hath declared himself to be of that perswasion, as to the manner of worship, *&c.* yet it is most apparent, that his understanding is so far divinely illuminated, that he owns it not in the worst parts of it, *viz. force, violence* and *persecution, declaration.*

"We cannot but heartily wish, as it will easily be believed that all the people of our Dominions were Members of the Catholick Church, yet we humbly thank "Almighty God it is, and hath of a long time been our "constant sence and opinion (which upon divers occasions we have declared) that *Conscience ought not to be constrained, nor People forced in matters of meer Religion.* It "has even been contrary to our inclination, as we think "it is to the interest of Government, which it destroys "by spoiling Trade, Depopulating Countries, and "discouraging Strangers, and finally that it never obtained the end, for which it was imployed, *&c.*

Here is as much said in so many words, as can well be, to *signifie* that they proceed from a profound Judgment, a true and constant Sence, a right opinion, great reason, a perfect sight of the true interest of Government, and all confirm'd by observation and experience, with thanks to Almighty God for the same.

Now for any to surmise and imagin, that there is a Snake in this fair Grass, and that there is some grand evil design to be ushered in thereby, is great Ingratitude, the effect of bad Jealousie, and the Fruit of some fearful Sect, that cannot live at ease while their Neighbours are free from trouble.

Indeed if the King acted without any of those excellent qualifications before mentioned, barely *as a Roman Catholick*, moving only by the Dictates of that Church,

you and the Nation might have ground to fear, that there is an *Adder* in the Graſs, which is much more dangerous than a Snake, and that it is with deſign not only to gain equal liberty for the Roman Catholicks, but alſo to make them capable in time to ſuppreſs all others, as the Nature of that Sect is with cruelty and violence, as this and many Nations can witneſs; but to think that this is the deſign of the King, is the worſt interpretation that malice and envy can put upon the words and doings of ſo great and juſt a Prince, whom none can juſtly charge with playing the Hypocrite, and diſſembling with God and Man, as ſuch thoughts would inſinuate, and he hath been a Sufferer for Conſcience ſake himſelf, while a Subject (tho of the greateſt Rank) and when [illegible]e in the greateſt power, who can ſay that ever he moved or put forward the making or executing thoſe Penal Laws about Religion, by which many mens lives, Liberties and Eſtates, have been deſtroyed in this Nation.

Let all ſuch thoughts and jealouſies be laid aſide, and with the King give humble thanks to Almighty God, that he hath placed ſuch a one upon the Throne, whoſe Heart he hath enclined to imitate his divine Majeſty in being kind, merciful and juſt to all, without reſpect to *Perſons*, or *Opinions*, and be ready to concur with him in his juſt deſign, and Chriſtian intentions of aboliſhing all Penal Laws, about that which is accounted Religion, but indeed is more properly *Opinion*, for the Chriſtian Religion, and Penal Laws to enforce it, were always inconſiſtent, as hath been hinted; 'tis *Opinion* and not pure *Religion* that hath deviſed, and ſet up Penal Laws to defend and propagate it.

The Chriſtian Religion came into the World without the approbation, conſent, or aſſiſtance of the great Scholars,

lars, Doctors and Rabbies, and other great men of the World, they were all disturbed at the appearance of Christ the Author of it, and consulted how to destroy him, and the highest professors of God and Religion in that Age, studied and sought all ways and means how to suppress and prevent the setting up and spreading the Christian Religion, but it being founded in the Truth in the inward parts, which God loves it grew and prevailed in the Hearts of people, amidst all opposition working powerfully in the Minds, Hearts, and understandings of Jews, Greeks, Barbarians, Schithyans, bond and free, making a real chaing in the inward man, not in the opinion or notion of things only, but they were renewed in the Spirit of their minds, their Hearts were purified, consciences rectified, their understandings illuminated, and their Conversations was such as became the Gospel of Christ, *Brotherly love*, *Kindness*, *patience*, *long Suffering with Innocency*, and other Fruits of the Spirit abounded among them; this was their State when Laws and Edicts of Men were against them, who had neither Sword, nor Penal Laws on their side; they were far degenerated from the Nature, tho not from the Name Christian, when they called to the civil Magistrate for Penal Laws, they were then run into Sects, Sides and Opinions, and into disputes and quarrellings with one another about them, envying, hating and persecuting one another, becoming as they got power as cruel to each other, as the Heathen had been to them, forcing and imposing their Faiths, Forms and Opinions, by banishments, Torments and Death, to the great shame of the Christian Religion; the foundation of which is love, peace and good will to all men, and the means it prevailes by, and the Weapons it conquers with, are not carnal but spiritual, *Demonstration*, *Perswasion* and *Conviction*, whosoever hath, or *desire* to use any other Weapons about the Christian Religion, are

certainly deceived and mistaken so far as to take false opinion for true Religion.

Now the chief end of Magestracy, Laws and Government among men, is to preserve and defend their properties, liberties and lives, from such as would spoil and rob them of either, and among all the Beasts of prey, blind Zeal, misguided Conscience, private dark selfish opinions are most ravenous, this Wolf in Sheeps cloathing hath sharp Teeth and cruel Claws, and a wild untamed devouring Spirit. Notwithstanding his pretence of Zeal and Conscience for the Christian Religion, 'tis the Spirit of *Cain* and *Saul*, that murtherer and Persecutor about Sacrifice and Worship.

But whosoever is led by his religious, or rather irreligious opinions, to endeavour the hurt or ruin of his Brother or Neighbour, about matters of meer Religion and Conscience, if he accomplish and effect the same, he is an *evil doer* and ought to suffer as an *evil doer*: And he that hath good will to all, and seeks the good of all, and hurts no man (tho he be of a contrary mind and judgment to him, and erroneous *opinions*) he is a *well doer*; and the Laws of God and all good men, who are appointed to judge and rule for God, are a Terror to the one, and a praise, defence and encouragement to the other.

Now as you are English men, your very Native Humanity (where it is not spoiled with false opinion) leads you to be sociable, kind and neighbourly, but where the principle and the precepts of the Christian Religion prevailes upon you, and possess your Judgments, *As to do to others, as you would have them do to you, do good to all, overcome evil with good, love thy Neighbour as thy self*, &c. I say, where these universal precepts of Christianity prevailes in you, (from the principle thereof

of) it makes you excel your Native Humanity, and will incline your Hearts to concur with things that are ſutable thereto, and to abrogate the contrary.

Did you and the Princes, and great Monarhs of the World but know, and experience, what eaſe, what peace, what pleaſure, what profit, what true honour, glory and greatneſs, doth and would attend the true obſervation of theſe Chriſtian precepts, beyond all that can be otherwiſe invented, or deviſed, you and they would be in love therewith, and ſeek only the advancement thereof, becauſe tending to the univerſal good of mankind, not only in this Nation, but throughout all Nations upon the Earth. It is but a little while ago, ſince moſt of the Courts and Magiſtrates of *England*, were troubled with people about Non-conformity, their Houſes broken up, their goods ſeized and taken away, not leaving ſome a Bed to lye on, nor a Pot to dreſs their Food in, nor a Stool to ſit on, nor Tools to work with; ſome places, their Trades deſtroyed, and their Bodies impriſoned: And if any Magiſtrate did but incline to kindneſs and moderation, people of the baſer ſort called Informers, who lived upon the Prey, would threaten them with 100 *l.* damage, ſo that many that were not willing to make havock of people, and their Goods, were forced to pleaſe thoſe Beaſts of prey, which was a trouble and exerciſe to many, even of thoſe called the Church of *England*-men themſelves, whoſe Humanity was not quite deſtroyed with their Chriſtianity.

All which the King in his gracious Declaration hath eaſed you and the people of, for which he is worthy of all gratitude and thankfulneſs, from his Subjects of all degrees, but eſpecially from his Non-conforming Subjects, who were a people deſigned for ruin, ſo that they are ingaged to pray, that he may receive from Almighty

God

God a hundred fold ministred into his own Bosom.

So if you join with the King in laying aside all Penal Laws in matters Ecclesiastical, and set people free from danger of losing their liberty and property for Non-conformity; and with him as your wisdom may devise, prevent the like to be made again in future Ages; you will not only please the King and the Nation, and all people therein, except those in whom *corrupt Interest, false Opinion, and fearful Jealousies* prevailes, but you will also go far in answering and fulfilling those Christian divine Precepts, which are according to the just and righteous principle of God in all men, and where it is not Stifled, Crucified and Buried, it will arise and Answer to your just and righteous doings, and you will have the comfort thereof in your selves, and will become examplary to the Nations round about, who when they shall hear, see and behold the blessed Fruits and effects, which certainly will follow your so doing, may be stirred up to imitate and follow so glorious Example.

If you consult with any that are fill'd with *Fears* and *Jealousies*, especially such who have a corrupt Interest to secure, (which cannot stand in that pomp and power they would have it, without force and violence,) you will be discouraged in so good a Work, as the preventing people from hurting one another about the opinion of Religion is.

Have a care of men of that temper, your business is to shew forth a noble and generous Spirit, Eying the good of all without respect to persons, or opinions, and to concur with the King in providing so, that it shall not be in the power of the present and after Ages, to spoil and persecute one another about matters of meer Religion and Conscience.

It is an ancient Maxim, *That the Truth is great and will prevail*, and the Christian Religion and Worship that stands

ſtands therein, requires neither Penal Laws, nor Arms to ſet it up nor defend it, if any ſhall call upon you or counſel you to continue and uphold ſuch Laws, ſearch them to the bottom, and you will find they have ſome private Belly Intereſt to carry on, and that there lies a venemous biting Adder in their Graſs, and that their Religion is ſuch, as cannot ſtand in the pomp of it without Penal Laws.

Tis the Whore, (the falſe Church) that rides upon the Scarlet colour'd Beaſt, ſhe can't ſtand alone, nor walk upon her own Legs; and it is ſhe that hath cryed to Kings, Emperors, Parliaments and great men, to force and compel people to bear her dead weight, under pains of Baniſhment, Hanging, Burning and Impriſoning, and the loſs of all the good things of this World without conformity to her, wherever you find this cry, aſſure your ſelves that it is not from the *Sponſe of Chriſt*, it is not the true Mother that would have the living Child divided or cut in pieces, becauſe her own is ſmothered and dead.

You may infallibly conclude, that it is not the Apoſtolical and primitive Spirit of Chriſtianity, that would have mens *Liberties*, *Lives* and *Eſtates* ſpoiled, and ruinated about matters of worſhip and conſcience, tho their worſhip was wrong and erronious, and their conſcience defiled and miſin-formed, and therein making conſcience of things which they ought not, nor may not, when with tenderneſs and meekneſs, they are better inform'd and inſtructed.

The true Churches power, as hath been ſaid, was and is *Demonſtration*, *Perſwaſion* and *Conviction*, and her *Weapons Spiritual* and not *Carnal*, if any dare ſay and affirm, that the New Teſtament way and means to convert or proſelite the World to Chriſtianity, was otherwiſe, or that the Chriſtian principle, *Doctrines* and *Precepts*,

cepts of Christ, can admit of any other means in
Christian Religion; let them come forth and shew th
proof in the New Testament, or else let them not
regarded.

In this the Children of God are manifest, and
Children of the Devil, whosoever doth not Righteo
ness, are not of God, neither he that loveth not
Brother, 1 *John* 3. 10.

*If a Man say I love God, and hateth his Brother, he
a Lyar, for he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath se
how can he love God whom he hath not seen,* 1 John 4. 2

FINIS.

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